

GILC 63
CAMERON

SPEECHES

LAVA ACCEPTANCE (BAY AREA CAREER WOMEN)

1993

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I thank Bay Area Career Women and your selection committee for choosing me as one of your first recipients of the LAVA awards. I say with all sincerity that this is truly an honor for me. I also commend the dinner committee for your thoughtful and thorough organizing of tonight's event.

I want to briefly acknowledge some special friends and associates who are here tonight. Thank you Lin and Pat for coming from Santa Barbara. It means a lot to me. Thank you David, James and Konstantin from the Morgan Pinney Trust for buying a table, and for your support of CUAV while I was there. Thank you Mark Chekal, one of the good people I worked with at CUAV. We survived 2 1/2 years of hell together. Thank you Ron Rowell who is Choctaw and the executive director of the National Native American AIDS Prevention Center. Thank you Les Hanson from the mighty and glorious Lakota nation who is the executive director of the American Indian AIDS Institute in San Francisco.

1993 is my 20th anniversary of living in San Francisco. I've met and worked with many people in the past 20 years but there are 5 lesbians who are very special to me.

But first I must acknowledge my Aunt Verna who was the very first lesbian I ever met. Verna was a good role model, she was butch and I was a tomboy. Uncle Verna, as we called her, helped me come out because she was out.

I thank Pat Norman. Pat taught me to question everything, especially my opinions and beliefs.

I thank Carmen Vazquez, my lesbian twin, with whom I've learned the importance of appreciating the absurdity of politics and life.

I thank Roma Guy, who has taught me to think globally and who has been a true and dear friend.

I thank Chrystos who has taught me about being truthful with myself and keeps faith in my creative abilities.

I especially thank Linda, my domestic partner of 12 years and mother of my son. Linda has kept faith in my body's ability to overcome serious health fears and challenges of cancer, major surgeries and other life threatening situations. Linda [REDACTED] has taught me about acceptance and forgiveness [REDACTED] loyalty and love and she supports my quest to someday be in a state of grace.

Finally, I thank all of you who are lesbians. Lesbian is a sweet and sexy word. I will never abdicate calling myself lesbian even if it is not cool in the 1990's in our community. That is who I am, a lesbian and I like it.

[REDACTED]

